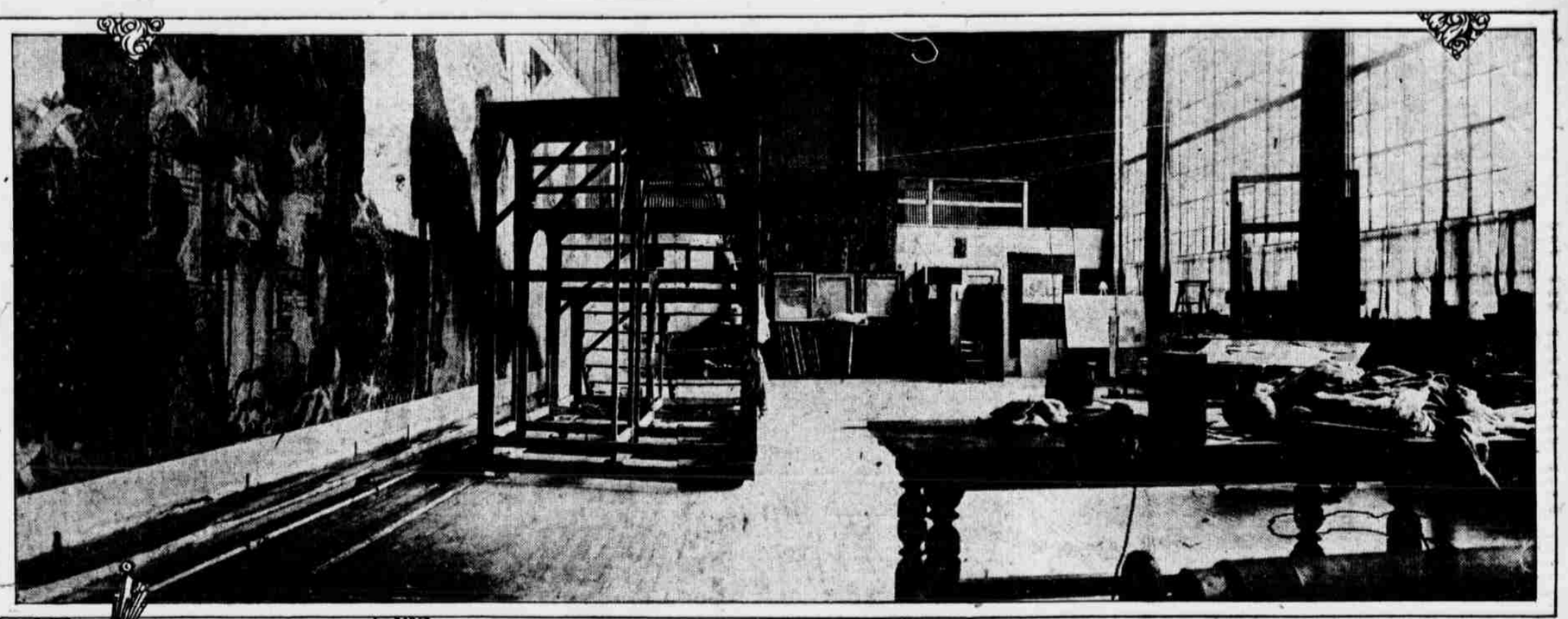
Jules Guerin's Mural Work for the Lincoln Memorial Ready

JULES GUERIN AT WORK ON ONE of the TWO DECORATIONS, EACH 12 X 60 FEET, for the LINCOLN MEMORIAL, WASHINGTON.



WORK ROOM of JULES GUERIN SHOWING ONE of the DECORATIONS ON the PAINTING WALL.

JULES GUERIN

Photos. by A Sun Staff Photographer.

Two Canvas Panels Practically Complete in His Studio Here After Three Years of Continuous Effort—Artist Tells of Difficulties Overcome and His Inspiration

JULES GUERIN has virtually completed the mural decorations for the Lincoln Memorial at Washington, in Potomac Park. They are two vast canvases, panels, each twelve by sixty feet. Indeed, they are now quite finished, as far as Mr. Guerin can do it before they are put in place in the Memorial building. There he may find it desirable to make some slight changes according to the lighting and other circumstances of their permanent position. Until then, he intends to do nothing more to them. One is already rolled for transportation. The other, which appears in the photographs herewith, is about to be taken down from the wall of the artist's spacious atelier.

There will be no doors to close the entrance of the Memorial building. It will always be open to visitors and to the wind and rain and snow. Opposite the entrance, and visible from the walks in front through the columns of a colonnade, will be the white marble statue of Lincoln, seated, by Daniel Chester French. The architect of the building is Henry Bacon.

The exterior dimensions of the Memorial hall are 156 feet by 84. The dimensions of its central space, where the statue is to be, are 70 by 60. Two rows of four columns each, supporting the great bronze beams that sustain the translucent ceiling, divide this central space from the ends of the hall. The Guerin panels are to be placed at the ends, some twenty-eight feet higher than the eye level of the average beholder. Below each panel and centering the stone wall is a tablet of the same marble, one tablet inscribed with the Gettysburg address, the other with the second inaugural. The color of this stone is a warm gray, about the color of the interior of the Pantheon in Paris, Mr. Guerin observes.

The exposure of paintings to weathering and to temperature and humidity extremes necessitated his using a special technic. Wax was the medium in which oil pigments of the ordinary kind were mixed. Wax, says Mr. Guerin, never hardens. It does to the touch, but not to such extent that the expansion and contraction due to temperature changes can crack the painted surface, while wax is, of course, impervious to moisture and frost.

"The great frescoes of the Italian Renaissance," Mr. Guerin remarked "are water colors really. A friend of mine nearly fell over backward when I told him that the other day, nevertheless it's true. Michelangelo used body water colors, at very much the consistency of whitewash. The medium in which he mixed them was white of egg. It lasts forever, under the conditions. I suppose a certain type of devotee of genius would be scandalized by a vision of Michelangelo at work cracking eggs by the gross to paint with. But he certainly did it, or some one did it for him.

"The mural painters of his day suffered terribly for the want of canvas. Lacking it they had to paint directly on the wall or ceiling where the decoration was to remain. That's why Michelangelo, working in the Sistine chapel, was obliged to get up on scaffolds, lie on his back, brush away at arm's length overhead and generally undergo torments of laborious inconvenience. To-day we can work in comfort in the atelier."

The canvas for the Lincoln Memorial Guerins is seamless. In other words, each painting is all on one flawless piece of it. Mr. Guerin says he was lucky in securing it before the war, as he couldn't have got it afterward. He worked on the two panels continuously for three years.

His atelier, probably the largest in America, was built to his order on the roof of an office building, somewhere in lower middle Manhattan. To say just where it is would mean an imposition upon him. In it, so far as possible, he arranged a working light similar to the light in which, in the Memorial Hall, the decorations will be seen. Every brush stroke, every bit of work on them or pertaining to them was done with his own hand. This is not told in order to assure an eager public that they are "all hand painted," but because in the painting of murals on such a scale it is fairly customary for the painter to avail himself of assistance in the enlargement of his sketches on the canvas, or even in the brushing in of broad spaces of simple background.

Mr. Guerin's painting wall, as he ingeniously arranged it, was twofold. He had both canvases stretched at once and could go from one to the other in order to be sure of color unities by simply manipulating two sets of ropes and pulleys. He accomplished this by stretching one on a sort of flying framework, suspended and horizontal when he did not wish to use it, easily lowered to position when he did. A travelling scaffold with landings at various heights and steps between gave him command of every part of the canvas.

The figures in his paintings are heroic, averaging eight feet nine inches in stature. To determine what scale would be most effective, he had a series of photographic enlargements made from his small studies for the decorations. These photographs he took to Washington, and successively tried, in position, scales with the average stature seven feet, seven and one-half, eight, eight and one-half and so on up to ten and one-half.

Nowhere is any part of his painting lighter in value than the stone. This was hard to believe in the atelier until he held up a sample of the stone against the canvas. Aside from considerations of color, he says the great problems of a mural painter with such a commission are to have the work decorate the construction where it will be placed, and to have it "stay in place" on the wall—i. e., express the wall, a flat surface, rather than seem to stand out and inappropriately obtrude itself into the general decorative scheme. To a newspaper man, at least, it was wonderful to see what warmth of color, what mass and modelling Mr. Guerin had secured without the use of violent hues and without strong contrasts of lights and shadow. He says it is all in the management of values.

In choosing his models for negro types he did not attempt to typify the central African negro races we know most familiarly in America. Anthropologically, the models who posed for his figures of "The Black Peoples," especially in the central group of one of the panels, symbolizing Freedom, are a mixed lot. Decoration, rather than realism, was what the painter sought.

This group symbolic of Freedom and Dedication is flanked on one side by a smaller group symbolic of Immortality in Life and on the other by one symbolic of Justice, guarded by the lights of Intelligence.

Of the other panel, the central group symbolizes Unity joining the hands of North and South. There is nothing in particular to distinguish North from South, and Mr. Guerin says there was not meant to be anything. Either figure may represent either section. It was Union he sought to express. And of this panel, one flanking group symbolizes Fraternity and the bond of the family, with the abundance of the earth, while the other symbolizes Charity bestowing the Water of Life upon the halt and the blind.

These appealed to Mr. Guerin as the themes of Lincoln's greatness. The accessory trees are Italian cypresses, ever symbolic of Everlasting Principle—although as sometimes painted they are funereal and are associated with tragedy.

Few readers will have forgotten that Mr. Guerin was responsible for the unforgettable color of the Panama-Pacific Exposition. He was the painter of the maps which decorate the walls of the Pennsylvania Station's mighty concourse. His works of smaller dimensions are generally known and valued.

"Doc" Greaven, Busiest Druggist, Quits

Manager at Perry's, With Personal Acquaintance of Thousands. Retires After Thirty Years

DR. DOMINIC A. GREAVEN

IF you have ever been in Perry's drug store on Park Row—and you must have been some time in your life—no doubt you noticed a rather robust man of average height, with a full flowing white mustache and a black skull cap, flitting about trying to do about seventeen jobs at once. If you watched this man reaching here and there on different shelves for bottles of drugs with which to make up prescriptions, you must have been impressed with the fact that he knew his business. Furthermore, you must have come to the conclusion that this white mustached man could have obtained his knowledge of the location of things in general only through long association with them.

But no matter what your thoughts were as you saw him fill order after order for a line of waiting customers, you would have been surprised if somebody had told you that he had been in Perry's for thirty years, and in that time had never mixed a prescription for his own use because he never thought he needed drugs to make him feel better. Yet such is the fact.

Dr. Dominic A. Greaven is his name. He has just announced his retirement as day manager of the busiest drug store in the world. Not that he has grown tired of compounding prescriptions and handing out patent medicine—the kindly doctor considered this his life's work—but he decided that thirty years was enough.

Dr. Greaven will be missed from the drug store near the Bridge. He has been there as long as the store itself, having moved across Frankfort street when Perry's did from the old Sun building at Frankfort and Nassau.

Has Wide Acquaintance.

As might be supposed, a man could not labor in one place for thirty years without picking up an extensive acquaintance of persons in all walks of life. During his long period of service in Perry's he has met and served many Mayors of the city, Borough Presidents, Aldermen, Commissioners, politicians, lawyers of prominence, millionaires, laborers, and last but not least newspaper men. Perhaps his circle of friends was largest among the latter, for he knew and was known by writers, editors, sporting page experts and publicity throwers galore. He has seen many work up from cub reporterdom to prominence. He has seen others flare up into prominence for a time and then drop out, whither no one knew. The doctor had a kind word for them all and was ever at their disposal.

Those who had the good fortune to know him came to depend on him, and often sought his advice when feeling queer. He belonged to the old school, and was known in his profession as a man who could not be stumped with any sort of a prescription. He has broken in many bright young men who are mixing prescriptions on their own account all over the country. Yet few of the latter can equal his record, nor perhaps can any truthfully assert that they never swallowed a grain of drugs in their lives, as Dr. Greaven can.

The doctor has said that while he knows the tastes of drugs, because it is his business to know, and can tell just what effect they will have on the human system, he has never found them necessary for himself. He said he took good care of himself, never drank, and always kept too busy to feel sick. If at any time he felt a little off color, he overcame the feeling by getting a move on and working a trifle harder than his wont.

But he would not deny that drugs were a blessing to mankind if used properly. However, he considered a person fortunate who didn't need them. His philosophy is that it is better to take a little trouble to avoid being sick than to take it easy until you are sick and then fill up with medicine. He also considers that a cheerful disposition helps one to keep healthy.

Although no records are available to show just how many gallons of medicine the doctor poured out in making up prescriptions during his thirty years in one store or how many tons of powders he has mixed to relieve everything from a headache to a lame back, it is safe to assume that the totals would be tremendous. One thing he is sure of is that he has used up many pens and many gallons of ink writing directions on the labels of bottles passed over the counter to customers. It would not be too much to say that if all these labels were placed end to end they would reach around the world. A good share of the way around at least.

Dr. Greaven also was an expert in removing cinders, bits of steel and other small junk from the eyeball. In this expertness he has played good Samaritan to thousands who have dropped in seeking relief. He sometimes spoke of his experiences. In the old days before cocaine was used as a local anæsthetic, cinders and steel that landed over the eyeball sometimes caused serious inflammation and resulted in permanent injury to the eye. Now it is as easy to remove a cinder from over the sensitive ball as it is to take an obstruction from under the lid. A tiny drop of a 4 per cent. solution of cocaine is applied with a pencil to the eye and a camel's hair brush is drawn across the speck. The patient, whose eye ordinarily would instinctively twitch from pain, feels nothing. An average of about five persons a day went into the drug store to have things got out of their eyes.

Humorous as Well as Serious.

This work had its humorous as well as its serious angle. For instance, on St. Patrick's Day some years ago an Irishman who had something in his eye came into the store and implored Dr. Greaven to help him. The unfortunate had just come from the parade and still wore his high silk hat. The doctor told him to take it off and place it on a shelf, at the same time instructing him to keep his good eye on it.

Then the doctor set to work to remove the obstruction by rolling up the lid with a match and plying a camel's hair brush, with which the cinder was quickly swept out. Of course the relieved Irishman was profuse with thanks and offered to pay for the service. To get rid of him the doctor walked behind the prescription desk.

When he emerged again the Irishman was gone, but the high tile remained on the shelf. Dr. Greaven was puzzled by this until he investigated closer and found that while the Irishman had left his tile he had taken the doctor's new derby. What the doctor said on making this discovery is not on record, but one thing is certain—nobody was ever again asked to place his hat on the shelf while having a cinder removed from his eye.

"The next time a man comes in here with a cinder in his eye," said the doctor, "I'll see whether he has an honest look in the eye before I attend to him. Then I'll give him a check for his hat."

The Myth of Arthur Hopkins

Talk With Play Producer Sets at Rest Some Odd Ideas

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

IT was obviously something definite in his doings that made Arthur Hopkins suddenly thrust his head above the crowd, and come, though somewhat shyly, into the estate of "leading figure in the theatre." Not that it is a unanimous verdict; there are those who disapprove of him heartily, but he could fairly well count on a two-thirds majority.

But just what this definite thing was nobody could quite make out.

If he played a system it was undecipherable from the outside. Many guesses were about. He was to be the sponsor for the great American play, and all he did was to be described as on that trail. He was to be the father of the mystical play, they said, and give to the stage its fantasies and pretty artifices. Next, he was to be the intermediary between the Continental drama, young or old, and the theatre of his own country. Then came a chronicler who stowed him into the catalogue as "always after the unusual play."

Mr. Hopkins contributed very little to these "sizings up." If he knew that there was a "Hopkins myth" in the making, he made no fuss about it, unless producing four such plays as "A Very Good Young Man," "Redemption," "Be Calm, Camilla," and "The Gentile Wife" in one season could be reckoned as a defiance to it.

The one sensible thing to have done in the matter does not appear to have occurred to the reputation explainers; namely, to go and ask Arthur Hopkins about it. Because the greatest common factor in the explanations was intellectualism, perhaps. Approach [illegible] to no respectful perhaps. Even it might have been, he himself did not know. There were, in fact, many whispers about "the Hopkins intuition" for the theatre, conceding him no more actual ideal than that.

Mysteries Vanished Quickly.

But when, finally, the obvious thing was done and Mr. Hopkins was questioned face front in the matter the mysteries vanished. Yes, he had a single rule by which he chose all his plays.

Was it that they should be American? No, he never cared where they came from.

Was he partial to this or that subject? Nonsense! What had that to do with it?

Must they be comedy, tragedy, highbrow, national, mystical, or what in Kingdom Come?

"You've hit all around it," said Mr. Hopkins, suddenly communicative, probably out of pity, possibly out of patience. "I ask one thing only of a play, that it shall be truthful. I don't care at all who wrote it, whether it's a first play or an American play, or foreign, or even bad. Nothing matters but that it shall tell the truth. The seed must be true. Then let the flowers sprout how they please. Stage technique, so-called, or play construction, has very little significance. It is commonly used to trim up the paper flowers. I am not interested in them, no matter how well they're put into a window or on a hat. It's only the real ones I want.

"The truthful play must always have consideration. A play like 'The Woman in Room 13,' for example, doesn't deserve a particle of consideration, because it's plainly a falsification of life, turned and twisted and buttressed up to seem like life."

"But it is entertaining—isn't that legitimate?"

"No, not when it pretends to be life and is actually an imposture. The average successful play is like these 'family remedies' that the quacks sell to the farmers in New England. The farmer has a little dose of the dope and he feels better. He doesn't suspect his fake remedy, but that's where it comes from. Now it may make him feel a lot better, but he oughtn't to have it. And the law recognizes that he oughtn't to have it, and takes it away from him whenever it can.

Should Protect the Mind Too.

"But the law doesn't go far enough—in fact, hardly even in the right direction at all. If it's legal to protect a man's body it ought to be ten times more so to protect his mind. But you can do anything to a mind that you want to—you can cheat it, and cut it from under with frauds and deceptions, and take from it even the power to want truth when it can get it. You can positively ravish a mind, and nobody stops you."

"Then—this is almost a moral issue, isn't it?"

"That's exactly what it is. It's morals and honor. A producer has no business to drug the minds and hearts of the people who come to see his plays."

"But something must be done about gayety——"

"There's plenty to be done. It's being done all the time. And it can be done without any abridgment whatever of this very conviction of mind. While it's true that I don't want falsity masquerading as life in my theatre, I have both arms open to sheer dramatic impossibilities, providing they are so produced that nobody could confuse them with life.

"For instance, I think a Drury Lane melodrama has great merit. Such a thing as 'The Whip' is fine entertainment, though from the point of view of the well constructing playwright 'The Whip' is sheer runaway. The authors of that kind of melodrama certainly never expect to be believed. Anything, positively anything, is done by them, and nobody is in the least fooled, and everybody has a good time. But far more important than the Drury Lane output is the field that we still haven't come into in our theatre, the field of the imaginative play, which is frankly not meant to be believed.

"One of the best examples of that kind of thing is the Russian ballet. There is a riot of art and artifice, with color, music, beautiful motion and a painstaking formalization of the emotions. Yet who would have been any happier if Petroushka had really been killed by a Blackamoor actually deadly? The ballets comment on life in their own way, perhaps, but nobody mistakes them for living humanity.

"In the mystical play, the fantasy play or the artificial comedy, all of which we must perfect for ourselves, we must produce them as true, not to life itself, but to their several forms of playing on life. All of these things will come into the theatre because we try to put them there. They won't just sift down through the roof.

"This effort must come from all of us at once. Authors will write truthful plays, managers will measure them by their truthfulness, then our actors must play truthfully, and we must put them into settings that help them along. Then, having arrived there, we must get audiences. If I have any feeling in the theatre that might be called national it is a desire for national taste.

"I don't believe it makes the least difference where our plays come from or whether we write them ourselves or go afield for them. I don't believe the large public ever knows the author's name. I know I've had plenty of them come up and congratulate me on writing the plays I have produced—didn't know the difference between author and producer.

"An author's fame in the theatre is hard won. And the better he writes his plays the less will the public be interested in him. No other art offers a parallel to it, but it belongs to the very nature of the theatre that the work itself should stand out and obscure the workers.

Audience Ignores the Source.

"In fact, I don't believe that audiences particularly notice where the scene of a play is laid or where it comes from, or if its author is French, Russian, Italian or what. The 'life of the author' belongs in the press agent department. Of course, just now, the American public would not want to see a play by a German author probably, but that is for entirely different reasons.

"I would not like to see that changed, and I don't think it could be. What I would like would be the growth of real dramatic taste in this country, so that we could have audiences we did not have to be ashamed of.

"The theatre is far behind literature—drama is still largely in the Bertha Clay period. You can go into the homes of cultivated people—that is, you find them with good pictures and good books around, and they know music. But mention the theatre and they're as like as not to tell you that the best play they've ever seen was 'The Man Who Came Back.'

"Books of a like character they wouldn't think of reading. There isn't anything like the public for trashy books that there used to be. I admit you more often than not hear them overpraise a good book or a fair one. But the day of the downright bad one has gone.

"Now all this can't possibly be the fault of the public itself. If it's true of one art, it's true of another, that a very considerable number of people will follow as high as you take them. In the long run it's up to the producer to lay the thing on his own conscience and hustle around to do better.

"The modern theatre gives him any amount of resource, too, if he wants to use it. He can do pretty nearly what he wants to with his scenery and his lights, and he can't in decency complain of a lack of good actors."

"You don't mean realistic scenery?"

"Well, I certainly don't mean unrealistic. It's the mood of a scene that I want. If I were staging a ballet where I wanted a quick appeal to all the senses at once with no one of them overacute I would want a background which fairly hit them in the face. I would want every contrivance of color and design that would galvanize and sensationalize.

Wants Only Two Types.

"But if I wanted to put on a quiet and thoughtful scene, where I wanted the audience to listen, I would have the most inconspicuous background I could get. In fact, the two kinds of settings belong to the two kinds of plays I would like to see in the theatre—the frankly incredible and the truthful.

"We have quantities of material in the theatre. It's up to us to use it honorably. We won't need to bother about audiences when we once get firmly in the right track."

"With no 'favored nations' clause'?"

"Of course not. Isn't the truth about a real human being virtually the same the world over? I admit that an American author has a little the worst of it for the present. He is not yet as respected as he should be in his own country. Take, for instance, 'The Gentile Wife.' I believe it was the most significant play by an American since 'The Easiest Way,' yet Miss Wellman had nowhere near the consideration for it that a play of equal worth from some well known Frenchman would have had.

"On the other hand, a play of foreign origin, though it may be flatteringly 'considered,' is by no means sure of success in this country. When they fail I believe it is because they occupy to the land they represent about the position of our own 'thrillers' over here—true to nothing in heaven or earth.

"'Redemption' has succeeded, I think, because Fedya is a human being into whose feelings we can go freely, because we also are human—many of us—and simply forget for a while that he is a Russian and we are Americans."

"Is the suicide at the end understandable to a non-Russian? At least is that way of finding happiness; that is, of course, there are plenty of men in America who commit suicide. . . ."

"There are, indeed," said Mr. Hopkins, making for the door, "and they leave happy notes behind them."